

# SEVEN THUNDERS

newsletter

www.seventhunders.org

June 2018

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Many thanks to all who contributed their time and talents to this publication. Articles may not be reprinted without permission from the author.

## BARRIER

by Leonard Marcel

In case 8 of the Hekigan-roku, we are told that:

At the end of the summer retreat, Ts'ui-yen (Suigan) said to his monks, "All summer long I have been talking to you, brothers. Look closely, do I still have my eyebrows?"

Pao-fu (Hofuku) said, "The robber has a guilty conscience!"

Ch'ang-ch'ing (Chokei) said, "They have grown".

Yun-men (Unmon) said, "Kan! (barrier)".

This case presents us with an opportunity to witness four Dharma brothers and masters in action. All of the protagonists were Dharma heirs of Hsueh-feng I-ts'un (Seppo Gison, 822-908) and all, each in his own way, became redoubtable masters over the course of their careers.

This case has been examined *in toto* in a previous teisho, so at this time the focus will be only on the

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Kan!

youngest member of this group at the time of this exchange, Yun-men Wen-yen (Unmon Bunen, 864-949), and his kan response, the barrier Yun-men (Unmon) erects.

Although he was the youngest of the group, Yun-men (Unmon) had already established himself as a consummate Zen master and would proceed to become one of the greatest masters in all of Zen history.

He entered a monastery near his home as a boy and studied there for several years before taking monastic vows at age twenty. The teachings there did not satisfy him, so he went to the monastery of master Mu-chou (Bokushu Domei, 780-877) to further his training. His enlightenment experience there is well known.

It is reported that Mu-chou (Bokushu) always kept the door of his room closed. If a student came for dokusan, Mu-chou (Bokushu) was able to discern the state of the student's mind by the sound of the footsteps. If he considered the state

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## SEVEN THUNDERS RETREATS & EVENTS

### FIRST SATURDAY SITTINGS

Monthly "First Saturday" sittings continue in Bethany House at the Trappist Abbey just north of Lafayette, OR. Orientation is offered at 8:15 a.m. and formal group sitting begins at 9:00 a.m. A talk by the teacher begins at 10:00 a.m., which is followed by opportunities for private interviews with the teacher. Formal sitting ends at noon. There is no charge, but donations for teacher support and for the Trappist Abbey are gratefully accepted. Here is the schedule for the remainder of 2018:

- July 7, Leonard Marcel
  - August 4, Leonard Marcel
  - \*September 8, Leonard Marcel
  - October 6, Sr Joan Saalfeld
  - November 3, Leonard Marcel
  - December 1, Brother Mark Filut
- \* Indicates 2nd Saturday of month.

### RETREAT SCHEDULE

- June 28 - July 1 – CIR at Our Lady of Guadalupe Abbey, led by Sr Joan Saalfeld. Fully Subscribed.
- July 10 - 14 – Zen sesshin at Stones and Clouds, led by Leonard Marcel. Registration on page 10.
- September 28 - 30 – Zen kosesshin at Stones and Clouds, co-led by Leonard Marcel & Lee Ann Nail. Registration information on page 11.
- December 4 - 9– Zen Rohatsu sesshin at Stones and Clouds, led by Leonard Marcel. Registration information on page 12.

## NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTIONS

Published three times a year, our newsletter is a benefit of Seven Thunders membership. Prospective members who would like to receive the newsletter can be added to the mailing list by contacting Jenny Brausch at [Livinggreen@comcast.net](mailto:Livinggreen@comcast.net). Complimentary copies will be sent for up to one year or until January dues requests are mailed. After that, if membership dues (full membership currently \$30 per year) are not received by March, you will be sent an announcements-only version of the newsletter. Please send membership dues to: Jenny Brausch, PO Box 3119, Albany, OR 97321. ✈

### ZAZENKAI

Held at the Stones and Clouds (*Rai'un*) Zendo in Lake Oswego, led by Leonard Marcel. Details on page 7. Upcoming dates:

- October 20 ✈

## SEVEN THUNDERS LOCAL SITTINGS

### PORTLAND AREA SITTINGS

■ Monday evenings at Stones and Clouds (*Rai'un*) Zendo, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m., zazen & dokusan. Contact: Leonard Marcel at 503.636.9009 or [marcellj@hotmail.com](mailto:marcellj@hotmail.com).

### SALEM SITTINGS

■ Wednesdays at the Salem Zen Center: 'On the Way Home' zazen from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. and an evening program (chanting, zazen, silent tea and Dharma talk) from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. 504.949.3188. [SalemZenCenter.com](http://SalemZenCenter.com)

### CORVALLIS SITTINGS

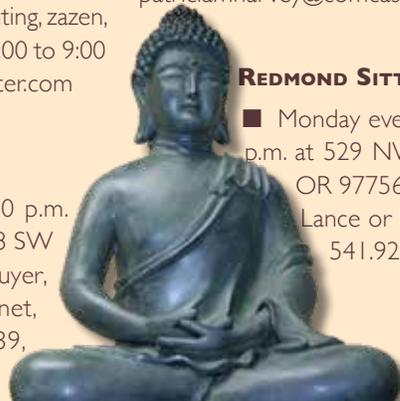
■ Monday evenings, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. (except Labor Day) at CMLC, 128 SW 9th St, Corvallis. Contacts: Jane Huyer, 541.752.6597, [ahuyer@comcast.net](mailto:ahuyer@comcast.net), or Glenna Pittock, 541.752.6139, [gpittock@yahoo.com](mailto:gpittock@yahoo.com)

### OLYMPIA SITTINGS

■ Monday evenings, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., and every Saturday morning from 6:00 to 8:00 a.m. in the Chapel at St. Michael Church, 1021 Boundary St. SE, Olympia, WA 98501. Three rounds of sittings (from 6:00 to 7:30) are followed by a reading from contemplative writers and a questions and comments period. Contact: Pat Harvey, 360.357.8401 [patriciamharvey@comcast.net](mailto:patriciamharvey@comcast.net)

### REDMOND SITTINGS

■ Monday evenings, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. at 529 NW 19th, Redmond, OR 97756. Contact: Richard Lance or Leanne Latterell at 541.923.7607. ✈



## OTHER PACIFIC NORTHWEST DIAMOND SANGHA GROUPS

### NO SANGHA, PORT ANGELES

■ Teacher: Kristen Larson. Zazen: Saturday mornings, 8:00 to 9:30 a.m. For more information, please contact Kristen Larson at 360.452.5534 or [NOSangha@aol.com](mailto:NOSangha@aol.com).

### THREE TREASURES SANGHA, SEATTLE

■ Teacher: Jack Duffy. Zazen at *Dharma Gate* (1910 – 24th Ave S.) on Wednesday evenings 6:30-8:30 p.m. and Friday mornings 6:30-7:30 a.m., followed by breakfast. For more information, please contact Larry Keil at 206.322.8759 or go to their website at <http://three-treasures-sangha.org/> ✈



## ENTERING THE “MARKETPLACE”

The board decided that it would be valuable to include a regular column about the participation of Seven Thunders' members in activities aimed at addressing social justice and/or environmental concerns in our region. Some of us independently attended the March for Our Lives demonstration in March and share our experiences below. Stories like these can be a source of encouragement for more expressions of what teachers like Thich Nhat Hanh and Robert Aitken have called engaged Buddhism. The Portland branch of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship (<http://bpf-pdx.com/thawing-ice/>) has been sponsoring monthly silent walks around the offices of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency on Macadam and Bancroft and is inviting people to gather signatures later in June and early July for an initiative aimed at banning assault gun sales (<http://bpfpdx.com/2018/06/13/stop-assault-gun-sales-in-oregon-ip43-june-27th-july-5-2018/>). Visiting its website can alert you to ways other Buddhists in our area are seeking to build a more just and sustainable world. When you join in these or similar efforts, please write a paragraph or two about what you did and we'll be sure to include it in an upcoming newsletter. Send them to [gasmith@clark.edu](mailto:gasmith@clark.edu). ✎

We fit in an hour at the Portland March for Our Lives on March 24 at the beginning of a weekend trip to Bellingham to see our eldest son and his family. I hadn't been clear about when or where the march actually began, but I knew that something was happening in Pioneer Square at around 10:00 in the morning. Walking the couple of blocks from where we parked the car, we saw other people with signs and figured we hadn't missed the event entirely. We arrived at the Square at the same time as the blocks-long parade of marchers. For the next 40 minutes, we watched as the plaza and brick-lined steps around it filled with chanting people of all ages and ethnicities. By the time we needed to leave, we had to squeeze our way past several

hundred people who ringed the southwest corner of the Square. Although action on the issue of gun control has seemed beyond the realm of possibility for more years than I care to remember, we left this event feeling that something fundamental is changing. I'm reminded of an observation by an astute retired educator from Seaside I've known for almost a quarter century now. When I was interviewing him four or five years ago, he said that the most important thing children and youth can contribute to public dialogue is the fact that they aren't adults; they are still able to think outside the constraints their older fellow citizens build around their sense of the possible. The day of the March for Our Lives, the power of that observation was visceral.

Greg Smith ✎

The current interpretation of the right to bear arms amendment does not make any sense to me. Why would it be not only possible, but also so much easier, to buy and use

something created with no other purpose than to kill than it is to get oneself licensed to drive a car? I realize it is a complex situation, with many factors to take into account – not the least of which are power and profit. But all the death resulting from this controversial policy is unbearably senseless. So, when the Parkland students decided enough was enough, with admiration for their courage and determination, I could do no other than support them by showing up. I met up with Céline Perrin and we joined the Portland March for Our Lives. Having no banners or placards of our own, we were actually on the periphery of the demonstration, simply wishing to add to the number of bodies present. It was in that periphery, at end of the march, that we saw a little girl of nine or so years who embodied to me the complete senselessness of it all. There she stood, posing for pictures with the saddest look on her face, holding a sign which read “Will I be next?”

Teresa Dane Marcel ✎





## A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Gregory Smith



As I mentioned in the March newsletter, the board has held three half-day retreats since August, 2017 to explore critical issues related to the purpose of Seven Thunders and steps that need to be taken to assure the strength and integrity of our organization moving into the future. Decisions related to how this will happen – especially with regard to maintaining our dual focus on Zen Buddhist and Christian Contemplative practices – will be shared at our annual meeting scheduled to begin at noon on July 14 at Stones and Clouds, in Lake Oswego. In preparation for that meeting, the board suggested including in this column a description of a planning mandala used by Matt McTigue to structure some of our conversations during the retreats. We found this tool helpful in broadening our thinking beyond some of the issues that generally absorb our attention during regular board meetings.

The mandala has five components: teachers, spiritual formation, foundation experiences; study and active learning; community relationships; social action and engagement in the world; and ethical livelihood. I'll briefly describe some of our thinking regarding each of these and invite you to consider what you might contribute to a broader conversation about these issues in July.

Much of our work in the retreats focused on the first component of the mandala—teachers, spiritual formation, and foundation experiences. We recognized that what makes Seven Thunders unique among other religious organizations in the Pacific NW is its commitment to providing contemplative experiences from both the Christian and Buddhist traditions while doing so in ways that avoid blending their unique liturgies and practices. We discussed how maintaining this focus will be challenging since few individuals from these traditions possess the back-

grounds brought to Seven Thunders by its primary teachers—Willigis Jaeger, Pat Hawk, and Leonard Marcel. We decided, however, that this should not stop us from making inquiries about other potential teachers who possess significant experience with both traditions as well as determining ways that teaching responsibilities could be shared by two individuals with contemplative experience in either tradition.

We discussed, as well, the possibility of experimenting with the timing and length of Contemplative Intensive Retreats (CIRs). Interest was expressed in scheduling one of these to match the Christian calendar in the spring by sponsoring an event from Friday evening through Sunday morning preceding Holy Week. This shorter CIR would be equivalent to kosesshins (short sesshins) that have been held at Stones and Clouds over the past three years.

Our consideration of the components related to study and community relationships elicited some fresh thinking. We acknowledged the value of the hour-long discussions following zazenkais held on Saturdays several times a year but felt that opportunities to engage in this kind of work together could be extended. In the coming year we will plan some informal gatherings at other times based upon selected articles or books. We invite anyone interested in hosting such an event to speak with either me or Mike Seely. Two potlucks held last December and then again in May reflected our attempt to do more to engender a sense of community among Seven Thunder members. Both were well attended and laid a good foundation for similar events in the coming year. We are open to exploring other possibilities to encourage interactions that deepen our sense of connection with and support for one another.

Social action and engagement in the world, the fourth component of the mandala, could potentially be a way to deepen those relationships as well as express our own concerns regarding the welfare of others as

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## A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT, *continued from page 4*

practicing Buddhists or Christians. Seven Thunders has made a contribution to the education of Cambodian Buddhist monks and nuns for several years. More recently, we have attempted to incorporate service activities into our common life with invitations to volunteer at the Oregon Food Bank or the Friday evening hospitality held at the St. Andrew Besette Church in Portland. A small number of people attended each of these. We will continue to explore similar possibilities in the coming year and encourage you to participate. We are also beginning a new column in the newsletter aimed at highlighting ways Seven Thunders members are expressing their social and environmental commitments. Please see the report in this newsletter about some of our members' independent involvement in the March for Our Lives during the spring; then let me know if you have something you'd like to share in future newsletters. Finally, we have reached out to the Portland branch of the

Buddhist Peace Fellowship and will now be receiving announcements of activities they will be sponsoring. We will use the organizational listserv to inform you of actions that may be of interest.

The final component, ethical livelihood, is something that we have not attended to much as an organization, although it seems likely that issues tied into livelihood have arisen in private interviews with our teachers. In reviewing the occupations of Seven Thunders members I've come to know, most have chosen work that embodies the path of right livelihood. At the same time, earning a living anywhere in our highly consumerist and competitive society has its challenges. Finding ways to provide opportunities to share those challenges with others may provide a way to overcome the division that can too often arise as people attempt to balance their own personal values and commitments with job demands and expectations. If you

think that creating a forum for such conversations would be useful for you, please share that perception.

To conclude, I'd like to thank my fellow board members as well as Leonard and Teresa for the time and energy devoted to the three retreats that surfaced the ideas and decisions described in this column. Our work is already entering the common life of our organization, and I hope that those of you who are able to attend the annual meeting in July will be able to deepen even further the heart-felt sharing that will undergird the strength and future of Seven Thunders in coming years. If you're not able to attend that meeting, feel free to communicate your thoughts with me at [gasmith@clark.edu](mailto:gasmith@clark.edu); I'll make sure that your ideas are relayed to the rest of the board. ✍



## GENERAL MEETING 2018 WILL BE ON SATURDAY JULY 14 – YOU'RE INVITED!

It's that time of the year when this quiet bunch gets together for food, sunshine (hopefully), catching up on the activities of the organization over the last year, and having a voice in the annual business meeting. This year we will also be celebrating the confirmation of Lee Ann Nail as an independent teacher in the Diamond Sangha lineage.

All members are invited! Please bring your favorite potluck dish and join the celebration.

- Location: Stones & Clouds Zendo, Lake Oswego
- Date: Saturday, July 14, 2018
- Time: Noon - 3 p.m.

For directions, and to RSVP, please contact Teresa Marcel at:

- Phone: 503.636.9009 (before 5 p.m. on Tuesday, July 10 – as Summer Sesshin starts then)
- Email anytime: [tdmarcel@mac.com](mailto:tdmarcel@mac.com). ✍

**OFF THE CUSHION: MOVING**

by Lisa Rosser

**M**oving is not a single event that happens when you pack your bags and fly to the new home where you then unpack your bags and carry on with life. For me it has been this long, nearly two year process that has led to being tested with how I respond to constant change in both routine and environment, and how I understand who I am. I found holes in my practice, as well as areas of strength.

How much does a family need? Besides the basics, what about saving the kids' toys and books for when they have kids? And what about those special dishes that belonged to my great great grandmother?

Christianity asks us to give away our own coat if someone needs it. I know this intellectually but here was the chance to put giving things away into practice. There is a certain selfishness in keeping items and not using them, a lack of security being expressed when holding on to more than is needed.

Deciding what to keep and pack turned out to be a very centering practice. I would consider one item at a time. Do I love this? Do I need it? Would I get it again? It's really beautiful, and it was my grandmother's so yes I will keep it. Or, I like these mugs, but we already have enough mugs. Too many mugs. Give away the mugs! This felt good. It's very liberating to pare one's ownership of things down.

During the house renovations and packing process we moved into a small two bedroom

apartment. We wanted to see how we felt living in a much smaller space. It was a big wakeup call: there was no room for extras! I did learn that very little is actually required to be content.

My equanimity started to unravel when we had accepted an offer on our house, only to have the offer fall through. I thought that I would be, in fact I planned to be, in Oregon in the summer. I found it difficult to have no control over the timing of our move. It took an additional four months to get another offer, and it was a contingency offer. What if their house doesn't sell? When will we finally close? At this point I found it much harder to be centered. The small apartment was no longer fun; it was cramped. My equanimity was gone, and depression began to find a foothold in my less than calm mental state.

It's the little unknowns. Will we be in the Pacific Northwest in time for the birth of our first grandchild? Where would Thanksgiving be? Christmas? Where would we live? I reminded myself that "not knowing is most intimate." I did not like this not knowing: the discomfort, the lack of control. It was difficult to focus. Meditation was a battleground. I attempted to suppress the emotions that were swirling around in anticipation of moving away from family. The thought of leaving my mother was the most difficult. I knew that the painful emotions would not be a permanent thing, that I would get through them somehow. But it felt like I was in a boat on the ocean in a storm, just hanging on while being battered by wind and waves. The opposite of being in control.

My piano went into storage for who knew how long. This stripping away of the defining



things in my life became my teacher. Who was I without the piano? Without my books? Who was I if I didn't decorate for Christmas because all the decorations were packed away, and we didn't have a house in which to host Christmas? I had always been in charge of Christmas.

The day finally came when it was time to get on the plane and fly to our new, and as yet, unidentified home. Were we doing the right thing? Would my siblings step in to spend more time with Mom? Just breathe....

We didn't make it to the Northwest in time for our granddaughter's birth, but we did get to meet her about three weeks later. We stayed at four air bnb's before we finally found a house to rent. That got old. Nothing was familiar, always a new setting to try to be centered in. There was no regular meditation happening at this point, really, no regular anything. I tried to work on just being, and being okay with not knowing what was next. I reminded myself to trust in the universe because everything would eventually unfold. Not by my timing, but as it is meant to.

I continually reminded myself: you are not in charge of Thanksgiving or Christmas. You have three grown children, let them figure it out. I practically had to tape my mouth shut to just wait until the water cleared, to

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**ABOUT "OFF THE CUSHION"**

**O**ff the Cushion is a regular feature of our newsletter. We invite you to submit articles about what your practice means to you, of activities off the cushion which feel like an extension of your practice. Please e-mail your submissions to newsletter editor Greg Smith at [gasmith@clark.edu](mailto:gasmith@clark.edu). ✍



## OFF THE CUSHION: MOVING, *continued from page 6*

not jump in and try to control the outcome. And in the end, Thanksgiving and Christmas were really lovely. Our family hadn't been in one place to celebrate together in years. Our adult children took care of the cooking and planning. It was nice to be able to settle into the season without all the extras that usually came with it. Guess what, Christmas will come and go whether I put up decorations or not. I could either enjoy the clarity of it or miss the way we had celebrated it before. I chose to enjoy the austere way we would be celebrating, one week into our rental house.

Rick and I chose to move here to be near our children and grandchild. It has been pretty great. We are still feeling our way: they have lives of their own and don't need us like they used to. Another transition, another look at how I use my roles to define myself.

We have been unpacking forever. Already I see things we should have left behind. Once you live without something for a while, you realize how unnecessary it actually is. Except my piano. Yes, I said my piano, even though we really don't own anything; we are just stewards. It is wonderful to be playing again.

As we have settled into a routine and started carving out our new life, the depression and need to run from emotions has lifted. I've already visited my family in Florida, and they are doing just fine without me. They miss me, but life hasn't stopped. I'm able to meditate on a regular basis. There is difficulty focusing, but it's getting better. I have learned a lot about myself during this transition. That my practice needs to deepen so that I am not so unmoored by change. That the constants around me don't define me. That owning too many belongings is like dragging a giant anchor around. I learned to gladly give things away. And that, while I am critical of myself and feel like I could have done better, I recognize that without the many years of practice it would have been a lot worse!

In the end we managed to give away nearly half of what we owned. I am now more comfortable, even curious and excited about what unknowns and adventures will come next. I know that whether whatever comes is good or bad, I can stay in the center where nothing changes, and where there is always peace. ✨



## ZAZENKAI & STUDY GROUP AT STONES & CLOUDS

Zazenkai are an opportunity for intense practice with the Sangha in a shorter time-frame than either a Kosesshin or a Sesshin, as they are limited to one day only.

There will be one more zazenkai in 2018:

■ October 20

Zazenkai take place from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. In addition to formal zazen, the day includes a sutra service, teisho, and dokusan. Please bring a brown bag lunch, to be eaten in silence. Teas and water will be provided.

You are asked to wear plain conservative clothing of dark or subdued color – no shorts or sleeveless tops, please. Zabutons, zafus, low and high benches will be provided, but if you have a favorite zafu or bench (no chairs) please feel free to bring it.

While there is no set fee for zazenkai, a **donation of \$20** is requested and much appreciated to help cover costs. Simply leave your donation in the dana basket in the hallway.

Zazenkai is followed by a study group, to which all are invited. Study group lasts approximately one hour, and is centered on a reading agreed upon at the end of the previous study group.

Please contact Teresa Marcel at [tdmarcel@mac.com](mailto:tdmarcel@mac.com) or 503.636.9009 to reserve a place for Zazenkai, and for more information. ✨


**BARRIER**, *continued from page 1*

of mind promising, he called out, "Come in!" then grabbed the student and shouted "Say it! Say it!" If the student hesitated, even for a moment, he shoved the student out and slammed the door. This happened twice to Yun-men (Unmon), but the third time he stuck his leg into the doorway. When Mu-chou (Bokushu) slammed the door, the leg broke. As Yun-men (Unmon) was shouting in pain, at that moment he also came to a profound awakening.

He stayed with master Mu-chou (Bokushu) for two years, then went to see master Hsueh-feng (Seppo Gison, 822-908), the pre-eminent master of the day and from whom Yun-men (Unmon) eventually received full Dharma transmission. After Hsueh-feng (Seppo) died, Yun-men (Unmon) began travelling and visited quite a number of other masters and cemented his reputation as a master in his own right.

In the year 911, at the age of forty-seven, he paid a visit to the tomb of the Sixth Patriarch, Hui-neng (Daikan Eno, 638-713) where he met and befriended Lingshu Ju-min (Reiju, d. 918). When the latter died some time later, Yun-men (Unmon) became head priest of the Lingshu monastery on Mt. Lingshu (Reiju-in).

The ruler of the southern Han empire at that time, Liu Yan (r.918-942), confirmed his appointment as the new abbot. As he was quite impressed by Yun-men (Unmon), he extended his royal patronage and protection. However, Yun-men's (Unmon) fame drew a great flow of visitors from all over China and even from Korea. All these visitors proved too distracting for Yun-men's (Unmon) taste, so in 923, he asked the ruler to assist him in building a new monastery on Mount Yun-men (Gate of Clouds). The ruler acquiesced, and five years later, at the age of sixty-four, Yun-men (Unmon) began living and teaching in the monastery on the mountain from which he took the name by which he is best known.

Yun-men (Unmon) greatly valued solitude and silence and continually refused various

honors. On one occasion, as he stood before the emperor in the capital, the emperor said that he wanted to designate Yun-men (Unmon) as inspector of all monks in the empire. Yun-men (Unmon) remained silent. An advisor whispered to the emperor, "Your majesty, this master is well confirmed on the path. He is not likely to enjoy a promotion." The emperor then asked Yun-men (Unmon), "Shall we allow you to return to your mountain monastery?" At that, Yun-men (Unmon) exclaimed three times: "Long live the emperor!"

One day, in his eighty-sixth year, he composed a farewell letter to his patron, and gave a final lecture to his monks, finishing with the statement: "I permit neither the wearing of mourning clothes in conformity with worldly custom nor wailing and holding a ceremony with a funeral carriage. That would be a violation of the Buddha's precepts and a source of trouble for the Zen school. Coming and going are continuous. Now I must be on my way." He then sat in a full lotus posture and died. Despite his admonition, he was buried with great honors in a ceremony attended by a thousand monks and lay people.

Yun-men (Unmon) was the first to use the words of preceding masters as a systematic means of training, what we now know as koan training. He was also famous for his "one-word barriers", which are among the most renowned in the Zen tradition. One of them we encounter in this case.

Here are a few others:

A monk asked, "What is the right Dharma Eye?"

Reply: "All-inclusive!"

A monk asked, "What is Tao?"

Reply: "Go!"

A monk asked, "What is the one road of Yun-men?"

Reply: "Experience."

Another occurs in Case 77 of the Hekigan-roku:

A monk asked Yun-men, "What are the words of the venerable buddhas and the great patriarchs?"

Yun-men replied, "Kobyō! (dumplings)".

A barrier of dumplings.

Known for his directness, Yun-men's (Unmon) one-word barriers were one of his teaching methods for evoking that which is incommunicable. "Kan!" is the most famous of these "one-word barriers" and has been highly regarded by Zen students and masters throughout the centuries. This barrier has tested thousands of Zen practitioners over the last one thousand years, as it tests us in our time. It has the force of a command: "Stop!" It is like a toll-gate or a frontier border check. He is saying, in effect, "Not so fast. I do not easily allow you to pass. Show me first your own expression of the non-dual, transcending subject/object, either/or, this/that."

What about this barrier?

When the founder of Myoshin-ji monastery in Kyoto, Kanzan Egen (1277-1360), visited his teacher, Daito Kokuchi (Shuho Myocho, 1282-1338), he was asked to work on this "Kan!" He sat in zazen intensively, day and night, until, at last, he broke through to a profound awakening. His teacher congratulated him and gave him the name Kan-zan, the one who breaks through the barrier.

Daito Kokuchi (Shuho Myocho), himself, the founder of the great Daitoku-ji monastery, worked on this "Kan!" for three years. When his insight was finally approved by his teacher, he wrote this verse:

I have broken through Gate Cloud's barrier –  
the living way is north, south, east, west.  
Evenings I rest, mornings I play –  
no other no-self.  
With each step a pure breeze arises.



## **BARRIER**, *continued from page 8*

In case 9 of the Hekigan-roku, a monk asks Chao-chou (Joshu):

“What is Chao-Chou?”

Chao-chou (Joshu) replies: “East Gate, West Gate, North Gate, South Gate.”

The town of Chao-chou was surrounded by walls and had four gates. These were open to anyone who wanted to go in or out. Chao-chou (Joshu) himself also had gates, such as holding fast, letting go, being constructive, sweeping away. His gates were open to anyone who wanted to visit him and learn from him; but unless you have made progress in your training and seen into your true nature, you cannot pass through his open gates. The real barrier is inside of you, inside of me. It is not Chao-chou (Joshu) or Yun-men (Unmon) who blocks us, but we ourselves.

We have erected so many barriers in our hearts and minds. Because of these, we have made ourselves slaves to dualistic thinking and to our fears, doubts, prejudices, cherished opinions, greed, desires, anger; in short, slaves to our selfishness and self-centeredness. Zen practice can free us from such spiritual bindings and open the gates of heart and mind. Liberation is the core of Buddhist teaching and Zen practice.

We routinely get stuck in dualities. Our tendency is to fall to one side or the other. Our minds work dualistically almost out of necessity. We constantly hear the same point being made in teisho after teisho, yet few seem to get it.

We need to appreciate the fact that both sides of reality exist simultaneously. The grasses, the trees, the mountains and rivers of this world have not only their own individuality but they are also, in master Hsuan-sha's (Gensha) phrase, “the one bright pearl.” That is hard to grasp because the two views seem mutually exclusive. What we are talking about is each person or thing, completely empty of independent essence, being unified with the whole universe and, at the same time, having its own distinctive charac-

teristics and karma. Both aspects exist at once. Passing through the barrier is seeing and experiencing that clearly.

The metaphor of the Diamond Net of Indra is a good way to appreciate this. In the diamond net, there is a diamond at each node. Each diamond is an individual and has an existence of its own. Yet, each diamond node is also interconnected with every other diamond node in the universal net. Each diamond also reflects every other diamond and contains every other diamond. They are mutually arising. When one diamond arises, the entire diamond net arises. Move just one diamond and the entire net of diamonds moves. This phenomenon exists not only in the three dimensions of space but also extends in the fourth dimension of time. In the diamond net time moves into the past and future. To affect a single particle of this universe is to affect its totality - past, present, and future. When you see the diamond net clearly in its totality, it is just the one bright pearl and the barrier is passed.

Every particle, every event is interpenetrated, co-dependent, mutually arising, with mutual causality. What happens to one thing happens to all things. That is the nature of the universe, the nature of the self. That is who we are. Whether we realize it or not, that is the way the world functions. When we live our lives out of the deluded notion of separateness, inevitably we clash with the natural order of the universe.

Koan are not about people and events a thousand or more years ago. Each koan presents us with essential nature and the relation between form and emptiness, and each koan is about you yourself. How do you respond to Yun-men's (Unmon) barrier, not just in dokusan or interview, but more importantly, in your daily life? Do you show the non-dual Dharma by the way you live your life? Do you speak the truth? Do you let the precepts guide your life? Do you live the viharas of lovingkindness, compassion, sym-



pathetic joy and equanimity? Do you prepare your meals and clean your house with focused attention? Do you do your work to the best of your ability, even when no one is watching or praising you? When disappointed by a spouse, partner, lover or friend, can you remain centered, kind and compassionate? When criticized or addressed harshly, can you, as Torei Zenji encourages, be “sympathetic and affectionate”?

All of these are part of passing through the barrier.

Yun-men's barrier is irresistibly exquisite. Can you pass through?

The fourteenth-century poet, Shuho (1282-1338), has the last word here:

Where the Way stands  
Closed and difficult to follow,  
Cold clouds constantly  
Embrace the green peaks.  
The one character “barrier”  
Of Yun-men hides the deed.  
The one with right vision  
Sees farther than ten thousand miles. ✎



**SUMMER SESSHIN AT STONES AND CLOUDS ZENDO JULY 10 – 14, 2018**



The 2018 Seven Thunders Zen Summer Sesshin will be held at the Stones and Clouds Zendo in Lake Oswego, OR, from Tuesday, July 10, at 5 p.m. until Saturday morning July 14, at 10 a.m.. Sesshin will be led by Leonard Marcel. Registration deadline is June 20. Registrations will be accepted on a first come basis. As this sesshin is usually well subscribed, early registration and payment is encouraged. Part-time attendance may be possible if registrations permit.

Sesshin will be followed by a transmission ceremony installing Lee Ann Nail as an independent teacher in the Diamond Sangha lineage.

Space is limited to a maximum of 16. Additional applicants will be wait-listed in case of cancellations. Sesshin fee is \$210 (member rate \$180) and includes all meals (vegetarian). A member rate is available to regular members at all sesshins and retreats throughout the membership-year. Non-members may choose to join Seven Thunders (dues are \$30). They then qualify for the member rate at this and other Seven Thunders regular retreats and sesshin through the remainder of that calendar year. A deposit of \$80 is required with your registration; payment in full is appreciated. Any balance is due by June 20. Should you need to cancel, all but \$25 is refundable until June 20; after that date all but \$80 is refundable. You will receive a confirmation from the registrar. If for any reason you find the full fee a barrier to attending, please check the box

on the registration form requesting a "scholarship" or contact the registrar. Affordability need not be a deterrent to attendance. Full or partial scholarships are almost always available. Donations for such scholarships are both appreciated and tax-deductible.

This is a non-residential retreat. For non-commuter participants, information about local accommodations is available. Limited accommodations in members' homes may also be available. Information about local accommodations and carpooling will be sent to out-of-town registrants upon receiving your registration and deposit.

As always, total silence will be observed for the entire sesshin. All attending are required to participate fully in the daily sitting and work schedule, including cleanup at the end

of the retreat. You are asked to wear plain conservative clothing of dark or subdued color during sesshin. No shorts or sleeveless tops, please. Zabuton, zafus, low and high benches will be provided, but if you have a favorite zafu or bench (no chairs) please feel free to bring it.

To register for the retreat, complete this form and send it with your deposit to retreat organizer and registrar: **Teresa Marcel, 1333 Skyland Drive. Lake Oswego, OR 97034.** Please make checks payable to **Seven Thunders.** Alternatively, you may e-mail your registration to the registrar and pay the deposit/fee online at SevenThunders.org (Click on the 'Contribute' tab and follow the donation process, leaving a note in the last window saying that this is your Summer sesshin fee payment.) Questions? Please contact Teresa Marcel at 503.636.9009 or [tdmarcel@mac.com](mailto:tdmarcel@mac.com) ✈

**REGISTRATION FORM**

**STONES & CLOUDS SUMMER SESSHIN, JULY 10 – 14, 2018**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I will be able to provide accommodation for \_\_\_\_\_ people.

Special dietary requirements: \_\_\_\_\_

I will bring my own zafu or bench.

This is my first Seven Thunders Retreat.

I request a scholarship of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose a donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Current Seven Thunders members:**

**Not a current Seven Thunders member:**

I enclose full payment of \$180  
(the member rate).

I enclose \$210, please apply \$30 to  
Seven Thunders member dues.

I enclose a \$80 deposit  
(\$100 balance due by June 20)

I enclose a \$80 deposit  
(\$130 balance due by June 20).

I enclose \$110, deposit & member dues  
(\$100 balance due by June 20).

**Please make checks payable to Seven Thunders.**



**KOSESSHIN AT STONES AND CLOUDS ZENDO  
SEPTEMBER 28 - 30, 2018**



**RETREAT REGISTRATION:**

To register for the retreat, please either pay your fee or deposit online at [www.SevenThunders.org](http://www.SevenThunders.org) or send a check (payable to **Seven Thunders**) to retreat organizer and registrar **Teresa Marcel, 1333 Skyland Drive. Lake Oswego, OR 97034**. Questions? Please contact Teresa Marcel at 503.636.9009 or [tdmarcel@mac.com](mailto:tdmarcel@mac.com)

modations and carpooling will be sent to out-of-town registrants upon request after receiving your registration and deposit.

As always, total silence will be observed for the entire sesshin. All attending are required to participate fully in the daily sitting and work schedule, including cleanup at the end of the retreat.

**RETREAT DETAILS:**

Space is limited to a maximum of 16. Additional applicants will be wait-listed in case of cancellations.

You are asked to wear plain conservative clothing of dark or subdued color during sesshin. No shorts or sleeveless tops, please. Zabutons, zafus, low and high benches will be provided, but if you have a favorite zafu or bench (no chairs) please feel free to bring it. ⚡

This is a non-residential retreat. For non-commuter participants, limited accommodations in members' homes may be available. Information about local accom-

The next kosesshin at Stones & Clouds will take place September 28-30, 2018. It will begin Friday, September 28, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., continue Saturday, September 29, 6 a.m. to 9 p.m., and conclude Sunday, September 30, 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. This kosesshin will be co-led by Leonard Marcel and guest teacher Lee Ann Nail, Diamond Sangha and Maria Kannon zen teacher.

**RETREAT FEE:**

Kosesshin: \$75 members, \$95 non-members. Includes all meals (vegetarian) on Saturday and Sunday breakfast.

The full retreat fee is required with your registration. Should you need to cancel, all but \$25 is refundable until September 14. After two weeks prior to the retreat, \$35 is refundable.

You will receive a confirmation from the registrar. If for any reason you find the full fee a barrier to attending, please contact the registrar requesting a scholarship. Affordability need not be a deterrent to attendance. Full or partial scholarships are almost always available for Seven Thunders members. Donations for such scholarships are both appreciated and tax-deductible.

**REGISTRATION FORM  
STONES & CLOUDS KOSESSHIN**

**SEPTEMBER 28 - 30, 2018**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I will be able to provide accommodation for \_\_\_\_ people.

Special dietary requirements: \_\_\_\_\_

I will bring my own zafu or bench.  This is my first Seven Thunders Retreat.

I request a scholarship of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  I enclose a donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Current Seven Thunders members:**

- I enclose full payment of \$75 (the member rate).
- I have paid online.

**Not a current Seven Thunders member:**

- I enclose \$95.

**Please make checks payable to Seven Thunders.**



**ROHATSU SESSHIN AT STONES AND CLOUDS ZENDO DECEMBER 4 - 9, 2018**



date all but \$100 is refundable. You will receive a confirmation from the registrar. If for any reason you find the full fee a barrier to attending, please check the box on the registration form requesting a scholarship or contact the registrar. Affordability need not be a deterrent to attendance. Full or partial scholarships are available to Seven Thunders members. Donations for such scholarships are both appreciated and tax-deductible.

This is a non-residential retreat. For non-commuter participants, information about local accommodations is available. Limited accommodations in members' homes may also be available. Information about local accommodations and carpooling will be sent to out-of-town registrants upon receiving your registration and deposit.

As always, total silence will be observed for the entire sesshin. All attending are required to participate fully in the daily sitting and

work schedule, including cleanup at the end of the retreat. You are asked to wear plain conservative clothing of dark or subdued color during sesshin. No shorts or sleeveless tops, please. Zabutons, zafus, low and high benches will be provided, but if you have a favorite zafu or bench (no chairs) please feel free to bring it.

To register for the retreat, complete this form and send it with your deposit to retreat organizer and registrar: **Teresa Marcel, 1333 Skyland Drive. Lake Oswego, OR 97034.** Please make checks payable to **Seven Thunders.** Alternatively, you may e-mail your registration to the registrar and pay the deposit/fee online at SevenThunders.org (Click on the 'Contribute' tab and follow the donation process, leaving a note in the last window saying that this is your Rohatsu sesshin fee payment.) Questions? Please contact Teresa Marcel at 503.636.9009 or [tdmarcel@mac.com](mailto:tdmarcel@mac.com) ⚡

**T**he 2018 Seven Thunders Zen Rohatsu Sesshin will be held at the Stones and Clouds Zendo in Lake Oswego, OR, from Tuesday, December 4, at 5 p.m. until Sunday, December 9, at 10 a.m.. Sesshin will be led by Leonard Marcel. Registration deadline is November 20. Registrations will be accepted on a first come basis. As this sesshin is usually well subscribed, early registration and payment are encouraged. Part-time attendance will be possible.

Space is limited to a maximum of 16. Additional applicants will be wait-listed in case of cancellations. Sesshin fee is \$270 (member rate \$240) and includes all meals (vegetarian). Non-members may choose to join Seven Thunders (dues are \$30). They then qualify for the member rate at this and other Seven Thunders regular retreats and sesshin through the remainder of that calendar year.

Full payment is due upon registration. Should you need to cancel, all but \$25 is refundable until November 20; after that

**REGISTRATION FORM**

**STONES & CLOUDS ROHATSU SESSHIN, DECEMBER 4 - 9, 2018**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I will be able to provide accommodation for \_\_\_\_ people.

Special dietary requirements: \_\_\_\_\_

I will bring my own zafu or bench.

This is my first Seven Thunders Retreat.

I request a scholarship of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose a donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Current Seven Thunders members:**

**Not a current Seven Thunders member:**

I enclose full payment of \$240

I enclose \$270 – please apply \$30 to

I have paid online

Seven Thunders member dues.

**Please make checks payable to Seven Thunders.**